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OSAKA RULES AUS OPEN, WINS FOURTH GRAND SLAM TITLE

The Japanese needed 77 minutes to sweep past Jennifer Brady of the US in straight sets 6-4, 6-3 in women's final

SUNDAY BLOCKBUSTER: THE MEN'S FINAL

Novak Djokovic will play for his 18th Grand Slam title while his opponent Medvedev will play for his first when they meet in the Australian Open final on Sunday. Djokovic leads Daniil Medvedev 4-3 in head to head. However, Medvedev seems to be in form with a 20-match winning streak since October — Djokovic too had been one of the casualties | P15

SHINING STAR DESTINED FOR MORE

- The 23-year-old becomes only the third player after Monica Seles and Roger Federer to win her first four major finals
- She had won 2018 US Open, the 2019 Aus Open & 2020 US Open
- Her win sparked celebration in corona-hit Japan. An astronaut tweeted 'congratulations' from international Space Station

TWO

OSAKA WILL RISE TO NO. 2 IN WORLD RANKING ON MONDAY

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Let's work together to usher in faster growth, Modi tells states

Urges setting up of district export promotion councils, purging of redundant laws

MANISH ANAND @ New Delhi

SAYING that the youth cannot wait for development any longer, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday asked the states to embark on the reform journey. Speaking at the sixth governing council meeting of the Niti Aayog, the prime minister exhorted chief ministers to align state budgets with the Union Budget, asking them to work on their respective pipeline of infrastructure projects, besides setting up task forces to lessen compliance burdens for the people and businesses.

Modi said private enterprises, which have shown much enthusiasm, should be embraced by the states for accelerated development. "The focus should be on ease of doing business for the international audience," said Modi, while making a mention of the liberalisation of geospatial data, adding had it been done a decade earlier "there would have been a Google from India."

He suggested the synchronisation of the Union and state budgets for multiplier effect. Modi dwelt at length on India's bid to become a global manufacturing hub, suggesting states should set up district export promotion councils, while identifying one product each for exporting.

"There's an all round eagerness to push forward with economic development. The youth of the country cannot wait," Modi said. The Centre, he said, weeded out 1,500 redundant laws and urged all states to do likewise. Niti Aayog Vice-Chairman Rajiv Kumar later said the CMs gave many actionable inputs on which it would work with the ministries. P9

As a government, we also have to honour this enthusiasm, the energy of the private sector

Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

'Allow govts to function'

New Delhi: Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Saturday criticised the trend to politicise policy decisions, while his Bihar counterpart Nitish Kumar made his case for a 'one nation, one rate', as he sought rationalisation of electricity cost. P7

DECLARE UPPER BHADRA, UKP AS NATIONAL PROJECTS: CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister B S Yediyurappa on Saturday requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to declare the Upper Krishna and Upper Bhadra projects in the state as national projects.

During the sixth meeting of the Governing Council of the NITI Aayog held virtually on Saturday, the CM also sought central assistance for a number of projects in the state.

Sources in the Water Resources Department said the process of declaring the Upper Bhadra Project as national project has already been initiated and it is likely to be declared soon. Once it is done, the Central Government will provide nearly 90 per cent of funds for the projects, the sources said.

During the NITI Aayog meeting, the CM also sought approval for six proposals worth Rs 6,673 crore for modernisation of canals and additional grants were also sought for river diversion projects.

The State Government also requested the Centre to provide Rs 4,300 crore to create an optical fibre network to provide connectivity to all government offices. The CM also pitched for setting up a mechanism to fast-track disposal of cases in courts as infrastructure projects are hampered due to litigation and environmental protests. The State also sought financial support to take up initiatives under the National Educational Policy.

CONTINUED ON: P4

K'taka steps up vigil against Covid-19 spread

NO LOCKDOWN, BUT DON'T LOWER GUARD: SUDHAKAR

Health Minister K Sudhakar on Saturday ruled out any Covid-19 curbs, like a lockdown or curfew, in Karnataka for now, saying that the state had not reached such a situation. All necessary precautions are being taken so that the state does not reach such a stage, he said.

Cautioning about a possible second wave of Covid-19, he urged people to take necessary precautions till March-end, which he said is necessary according to experts.

RT-PCR test report must for travellers from Maharashtra

- Karnataka has issued new guidelines mandating all those coming from Maharashtra to the state to carry a negative RT-PCR test report
- This comes days after similar guidelines were issued for those entering the state from Kerala

Travellers from UK, Europe, Middle East should have -ve certificate

- All passengers travelling on flights from the United Kingdom, Europe and the Middle East should carry a RT-PCR negative test certificate.
- They will also have to undergo RT-PCR test after arriving in Karnataka

N440K variant spreading more in South India

- A recent study suggests that the N440K variant of the Novel Coronavirus is spreading faster in the southern states | P3

India, China hold military talks

New Delhi: India and China on Saturday held the 10th round of Corps Commander-level talks with a focus on taking forward the disengagement process in Hot Springs, Gogra and Depsang in eastern Ladakh. The talks are taking place two days after the Chinese and Indian militaries completed disengagement from North and South banks of Pangong lake areas. ENS | P10

WITH THIS ISSUE
THAT GUT FEELING
PLUS 12 PAGES MAGAZINE

Toolkit doesn't sow disaffection, Disha tells HC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

AN online 'toolkit' is merely a 'resource document', it does not 'sow disaffection' and there is no evidence to show the toolkit on farmers' protest is responsible for the violence on January 26, activist Disha Ravi told a Delhi court on Saturday as she sought bail.

"If highlighting the farmers' protest globally is sedition, I'm better (off) in jail," Disha said through her lawyer in court, which will give its decision on the bail on Tuesday.

The bail plea was strongly opposed by the Delhi Police, which alleged that Disha was preparing the toolkit with those advocating Khalistan and she was part of a global conspiracy to defame India and create unrest in the country in the garb of the farmers' protest. "This was not just a toolkit. The real plan was to defame India and create unrest here," the police told additional sessions judge Dharmender Rana. CONTINUED ON: 10

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